

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 BEIRUT 2366

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, MORG, LE
SUBJECT: GROWING MOSLEM AND LEFTIST CRITICISM OF LEBANESE
ARMY AS MARONITE DOMINATED

REF: (A) USDAO BEIRUT 2280 (DTG 221034Z APR 78),
(B) USDAO BEIRUT 2169 (DTG 180739Z APR 78)

1. SUMMARY. LONG-STANDING CRITICISM BY LEBANESE MOSLEMS
AND LEFTISTS OF MARONITE DOMINATION OF LEBANESE ARMY
WAS QUIESCENT DURING MONTHS FOLLOWING END OF CIVIL
WAR AND AFTER APPOINTMENT OF VICTOR KHOURY AS NEW
ARMY COMMANDER IN MARCH 1977, BUT BEGAN TO REAPPEAR AT
END OF 1977, AND TOOK DRAMATIC UPTURN AFTER FEBRUARY
FAYYADIYAH INCIDENTS. CRITICISM OF MARONITE DOMINATION
OF ARMY HAS REACHED CRESCENDO PROPORTIONS IN LAST TWO
WEEKS. MOURABITOUN LEADER IBRAHIM QULAYLAT HELD PRESS
CONFERENCE ON NUMBER OF ISSUES APRIL 18, INCLUDING
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ROUND DENUNCIATION OF CONTINUED MARONITE DOMINATION
OF THE ARMY. ACCOUNT OF HIS CRITICISM WAS CENSORED
OUT OF BEIRUT PRESS, BUT IN AT LEAST ONE LOCATION
MOURIBITOUN ELEMENTS DISTRIBUTED A TRACT EARLY APRIL 21
WHICH INCLUDED LONG LIST OF MARONITE OFFICERS IN KEY
POSITIONS IN THE ARMY. RISING CRITICISM COINCIDES
WITH APPARENT PALESTINIAN EFFORT TO REVIVE LEFTIST

"LEBANESE ARAB ARMY" (REFTEL A). END SUMMARY

2. AFTER APPOINTMENT OF VICTOR KHOURY AS ARMY COMMANDER, MOSLEMS AND LEFTISTS CONTINUED TO STATE THEIR LONG-HELD POSITION THAT LEBANON'S NEW POST-WAR ARMY SHOULD BE BUILT ON NON-CONFESSIONAL BASIS AND KEPT OUT OF POLITICS. FOR EXAMPLE, MALIK SALAAM, MEMBER OF MODERATE SUNNI ISLAMIC GROUP, QUOTED IN AL MURABIT ON OCTOBER 1, CALLED FOR ELIMINATION OF POLITICAL CONFESSIONALISM IN THE ARMY AND EXCLUSION OF ARMY PERSONNEL FROM POLITICS. HE SAID THAT, IF LEBANON HAD HAD A NON-FACTIONAL ARMY BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR, EVENTS WOULD HAVE BEEN QUITE DIFFERENT. AL MURABIT ON OCTOBER 22 CARRIED A DECLARATION BY MOURIBITOUN LEADER IBRAHIM QULAYLAT IN WHICH HE SAID, "IT IS PRESUMED THAT THE LEBANESE ARMY, AFTER THE CATASTROPHE WHICH HAS BEFALLEN THE COUNTRY AND ITS PEOPLE, WILL BE BUILT ON A NATIONAL BASIS IN ORDER THAT THE CAUSES OF ITS FRAGMENTATION CAN BE AVOIDED. THE OLD METHODS, HOWEVER, ARE BEING APPLIED AGAIN IN REBUILDING THE ARMY, THAT IS, CONFESSIONALISM, POLITICAL, FAMILY AND TRIBAL SUBSERVICIENCIES ... AS A MOVEMENT, WE ARE FOLLOWING CAREFULLY WHAT IS HAPPENING BEHIND THE SCENE; THERE MUST BE A COURAGEOUS STAND TO PREVENT THE OLD MENTALITY FROM RULING THIS INSTITUTION."

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3. CRITICISM TOOK ON MORE SPECIFIC CHARACTER FOLLOWING FAYYADIYAH INCIDENTS IN EARLY FEBRUARY. AL HURRIYAH (COMMUNIST ACTION ORGANIZATION) WROTE ON FEBRUARY 13, 1978, THAT THE RIGHTIST LEBANESE FRONT WANTED THE ARMY TO BE IN "ITS OWN FORM AND STYLE." SABAH AL KHAYR (LEFTIST WING OF POPULAR SYRIAN PARTY) WROTE ON FEBRUARY 19, THAT, "WHOEVER READS THE DECLARATIONS OF THE LEBANESE FRONT CAN SEE THAT THE LEBANESE ARMY IS NOT THE ARMY OF ALL OF LEBANON, BUT THE ARMY OF THE LEBANESE FRONT. THIS IS TO BE REJECTED. RESPONSIBLE DAILY NEWS BULLETINING, THE MIDDLE EAST REPORTER, ON FEBRUARY 23 WROTE THAT, "MOSLEM AND LEFTIST LEADERS, HAVING BEEN PROFOUNDLY CONCERNED BY THE IMPRESSION THAT THE NUCLEUS OF THE NEW ARMY APPEARED TO BE SIDING WITH THE RIGHTISTS, NOW INSIST ON A FORMULA FOR ESTABLISHING WHAT THEY CALL "A NATIONAL BALANCE" WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES. BOTH THE "ISLAMIC COALITION," FORMED OF PROMINENT SUNNI LEADERS, AND THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT," AN ALLIANCE OF LEFTISTS AND MOSLEM GROUPS, MAKE THE ISSUE OF NATIONAL ENTENTE DEPENDENT UPON FULFILLMENT OF THIS

CONDITION. . . THE POLITICAL COUNCIL OF THE
"NATIONAL MOVEMENT" ISSUED A STATEMENT EXPRESSING
THIS VIEW. MR. RASHID KARAMI . . . WAS REPORTED
TO FEEL THAT NATIONAL ENTENTE WOULD BE MEANINGLESS
IF NO NATIONAL BALANCE IS INSURED IN THE NEW ARMY."

4. PALESTINIAN ILA AL AMAN (PFLP-GC, JIBRIL FACTION)
WROTE ON MARCH 3 THAT NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WOULD
DEPEND UPON TWO THINGS, DISARMAMENT OF THE LEBANESE
FRONT AND "DISSOLUTION OF THE LEBANESE ARMY, WHICH
IS CONTROLLED BY THE ISOLATIONISTS."

5. FOLLOWING THE AYN AR-RUMMANEH-SHIAH INCIDENTS
(IN WHICH THE LEBANESE ARMY HAD NOT BEEN INVOLVED IN ANY
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SAY), THE ATTACK HAS TAKEN ON NEW VIGOUR. THE
POLITICAL COUNCIL OF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT ISSUED A
STATEMENT ON APRIL 18 WHICH IN PART SAID, "THE CON-
TINUATION OF BUILDING THE CONFESSIONAL AND FACTIONAL
ARMY SUPPORTS THE ISOLATIONISTS BECAUSE THE ARMY IS
CONNECTED WITH THE ISOLATIONIST MILITIAS. THIS ARMY
IS REJECTED BY THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE LEBANESE
PEOPLE, AND WILL REMAIN INCAPABLE OF PERFORMING
THE MISSIONS ASSIGNED TO IT." THE STATEMENT NOTED
THAT MAJOR SA'D HADDAD, LEADER OF THE CHRISTIAN FORCES
IN THE SOUTH, IS STILL ON THE ARMY PAYROLL.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 BEIRUT 2366

6. MOURIBITOUN LEADER IBRAHIM QULAYLAT, ACCORDING TO THE PALESTINIAN NEWS AGENCY Wafa, AT A PRESS CONFERENCE CRITICIZED THE GOVERNMENT FOR NOT ANNOUNCING PLANS FOR THE NEW ARMY. HE CLAIMED THAT THE ARMY HAS ANNOUNCED THE GRADUATION OF "NEW RECRUITS" WHO WERE IN FACT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FAYYADIYAH AND AYN AR-RUMMANEH-SHIAH CLASHES. REFERRING TO CURRENT LEBANESE FRONT DEMANDS THAT THE "PALESTINIAN DOSSIER" BE OPEN AND SUBJECT TO NATIONAL DEBATE, QULAYLAT CALLED FOR OPENING THE "ARMY DOSSIER."

7. MOST OF WHAT QULAYLAT HAD TO SAY ON APRIL 18 WAS CENSORED OUT OF THE BEIRUT PRESS. IN AT LEAST ONE LOCATION IN WEST BEIRUT (NEAR THE MURR TOWER), ARMED MOURIBITOUN ELEMENTS EARLY APRIL 21 DISTRIBUTED A LEAFLET BASED ON IT. EXTRACTS AS FOLLOWS (DATT NOTATIONS IN PARENTHESES): "WE ARE FOR OPENING THE PALESTINIAN FILE AND ALL THE FILES, ESPECIALLY THE FILE OF TREASON, CONFIDENTIAL

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OCCUPATION AND THE ARMY. . . HERE ARE THE NAMES OF THE COMMANDERS OF THE ARMY OF MARONITE LEGALITY:

ALBERT MUNAYER, MARONITE, LOGISTIC CHIEF OF STAFF,
EMILE LAHOUD, MARONITE, CHIEF OF CABINET OF ARMY
COMMANDER,
HENRY AZAR, ARMENIAN, CHIEF OF THE ARMY SECRETARIAT GENERAL,
ROGER AQL, MARONITE, CHIEF OF THE MILITARY CABINET OF THE
MINISTER OF DEFENSE,
MILAD AL QAREH, MARONITE, CHIEF OF THE CIVILIAN CABINET
OF THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE,
FARRIS LAHOUD, MARONITE, G-1,
JONNY ABDO, MARONITE, G-2, FORMER MEMBER OF PHALANGE
WAR COUNCIL,
ZUHAYR AL TANNIR, SUNNI, G-3, SPECIAL SITUATION,
FARIS MADI, MARONITE, G-4, HIS BROTHER IS A PHALANGE CHIEF,
MAJOR JUBRAN, MARONITE, ASSISTANT TO FARIS,
MAHMOUD MATAR, G-5 (MOSLEM),
ELIAS HADDAD, GREEK CATHOLIC, DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL, (AT
DISPOSITION OF MOD),
NAIM SALAME, MARONITE, ASSISTANT CHIEF OF PERSONNEL,
COLONEL BAHLIS, MARONITE, DIRECTOR OF CIVIL DEFENSE

(AT DISPOSITION OF MOD),
ANTOINE SA'D, MARONITE, ASSISTANT TO DIRECTOR OF
CIVIL DEFENSE, (AT DISPOSITION OF MOD),
ANTOINE KHALIFE, MARONITE, DIRECTOR OF MOBILIZATION,
MEMBER OF PHALANGE WAR COUNCIL,
JEAN KASTOUN, MARONITE, ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT,
JEAN SALEM, GREEK CATHOLIC, DIRECTORATE OF COMMAND,
FAWZI HNOUD, MARONITE, DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION,
(AT DISPOSITION OF MOD),
GEORGE QUMAYR, MARONITE, DIRECTOR OF HEALTH,
MUSA PRINCE, MARONITE, HEAD OF THE MILITARY HOSPITAL,
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ABDALLAH KHOURY, MARONITE, DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS,
LOUIS KRAIDY, MARONITE, INSPECTOR GENERAL, (COL. SAMI
HUSAYNI, SUNNI)
GEORGE QAZZI, MARONITE, HEAD OF INVESTMENT COMMISSION,
ROGER FEGHALI, MARONITE, COMMANDER OF SARBA SECTOR,
MICHEL SALEM, MARONITE, RECONNAISSANCE COMMANDER,
WANTED IN THE FAYYADIYAH ESCAPE, (WAS DEPUTY BARRACKS
COMMANDER),
NAIF KALLAS, GREEK CATHOLIC, COMMANDER OF THE
MILITARY POLICE (AT DISPOSITION OF MOD)."

8. THE TRACT CONTINUES WITH THE CLAIM THAT THERE ARE
12 MARONITE OPERATION SECTOR COMMANDERS, TWO GREEK
ORTHODOX, TWO GREEK CATHOLICS, ONE SHI'A, ONE DRUZE
AND NO SUNNI. ALL FOUR NON-INFANTRY OPERATIONS SECTOR'S
COMMANDERS WERE GREEK CATHOLICS. OF THE THREE ARTILLERY
BATTALION COMMANDERS, TWO WERE MARONITES, ONE SHI'A.
OF THE ARMORED BATTALION COMMANDERS, FOUR WERE
CHRISTIAN, INCLUDING THREE MARONITES, ONLY TWO NON-
CHRISTIANS. IN THE "SUPPORT DEPARTMENT," THERE WERE
THREE CHRISTIANS, OF WHICH TWO WERE MARONITES, WITH
TWO SUNNI MOSLEMS AND ONE SHI'A. IN THE AIR FORCE AND
NAVY, THE TRACT NOTED THAT THE AIR FORCE COMMANDER WAS
A MARONITE, GEORGE GHAREEB (NOW AN
ORTHODOX, SINCE RETIRED), THE COMMANDER OF THE RAYAK
BASE WAS MARONITE FAHEEM AL HAJ (NOW A SUNNITE);
THE COMMANDER OF THE KULAIA' BASE WAS MARONITE MAJOR
KASSIS; THE COMMANDER OF THE BEIRUT AIRPORT BASE WAS
MARONITE FAWZI ABU FARHAT (NOW A SUNNITE), THE COMMANDER
OF THE RADAR BASE WAS (FNU) QURTBAWI, A MARONITE.
(RADAR BASE DESTROYED IN 1976.) THE COMMANDER OF THE
NAVY WAS MARONITE FARIS LAHOUD, (NOW ANOTHER MARONITE)."

9. DATT COMMENT: THE MURABITOUN LIST IS REplete WITH
ERRORS, EXCLUDES SEVERAL KEY DRUZE AND MUSLIM OFFICERS
AND GENERALLY IS BASED ON PREWAR RELIGIOUS ALLOCATIONS.
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HOWEVER, OF THE LAF HEADQUARTERS 29 PRINCIPAL STAFF OFFICERS, 15 ARE MARONITES, SO THE COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE MARONITE DOMINATION OF THE ARMY'S COMMAND STRUCTURE APPEAR TO HAVE SOME BASIS. THE OPERATIONAL UNITS AND MILITARY REGIONS ARE MORE BALANCED BECAUSE OF RELIGIOUS CONFESSIONALISM; I.E., OF THE FIVE MILITARY REGIONS, THE COMMANDERS ARE ONE MARONITE, ONE SUNNITE, ONE DRUZE, ONE CATHOLIC AND A SHI'A. THE DAO IS PREPARING AN UP TO DATE LIST OF STAFF POSITIONS BY RELIGION WHICH WILL BE SENT BY SEPTTEL. END DATT COMMENT.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 BEIRUT 2366

10. MOST MODERATE STATEMENT OF MOSLEM CONCERN ABOUT THE ARMY BUT NEVERTHELESS UNMISTAKEABLE IN ITS MEANING COMES FROM SA'EB SALAAM IN AN INTERVIEW IN AL USBUA AL ARABI AND "MAGAZINE," ISSUE OF APRIL 22: "THE GREATEST ERROR WHICH COULD BE COMMITTED TODAY WOULD BE TO TRY TO REBUILD THE ARMY ON THE SAME MARONITE BASIS, FOR THE PROTECTION

OF THE MARONITES. THAT IS ONE OF THE DIRECT CAUSES OF THE CRISIS WHICH WE ARE NOW GOING THROUGH. WE DEMAND THAT THE ARMY BE RECONSTRUCTED ON A HEALTHY BASIS, EQUITABLE FOR ALL CITIZENS. THE CONFSSIONAL PROPORTIONMENT OF THE ARMY (30-70, 60-40) IS OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE; THE ESSENTIAL IS TO RECOGNIZE THAT TWO PARTIES EXIST WHICH SHOULD FEEL THAT THE ARMY BELONGS TO BOTH OF THEM. BY A HEALTH BASIS, I MEAN MODERN BASIS, AUTHENTICALLY MILITARY. THAT IS NOT JUST MY OPINION, BUT ALSO THAT OF MANY MARONITES, INCLUDING THE CURRENT AND THE FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON DEFENSE, BOTH THEMSELVES FORMER MILITARY MEN, BOTH OF THEM MARONITES WHOSE NATIONALISM IS UNQUESTIONED. BOTH OF THEM, AND I, BELIEVE THAT THE CURRENT LAW GOVERNING THE ARMY IS NOT ADEQUATE. UNFORTUNATELY, TODAY THERE ARE VARIOUS OPPOSITIONS TO THE ADOPTION OF A NEW LAW ON THE ARMY. WE HAVE NOT LEARNED FROM THE PAST, IN THE SENSE THAT THERE IS STILL A TENDENCY TO REBUILD AN ARMY WHICH COULD BE DESCRIBED AS A MARONITE ARMY. I DO NOT SAY THIS AS A MOSLEM, IN SPITE OF FEELINGS WHICH THIS SITUATION IS CREATING AMONG THE MOSLEMS, BUT AS A LEBANESE, AWARE OF THE DAMAGE WHICH SUCH AN ARMY COULD DO TO LEBANON AND TO THE MARONITES THEMSELVES. . . I DO NOT LIKE THE TERM "A BALANCED ARMY" BECAUSE THE TERM "BALANCED" IMPLIES THAT THERE ARE TWO RIVAL CAMPS. I AM FOR AN "EQUALITARIAN" ARMY, THE KIND OF EQUALITY WHICH SHOULD EXIST AMONG BROTHERS. NOT BEING MYSELF A SPECIALIST IN MILITARY AFFAIRS, I HAVE BASED MY OPINION OF THE SUBJECT ON THE THINKING OF MILITARY EXPERTS. THEIR THINKING IS BASED ON THE EXPERIENCES OF OTHER NATIONS WHICH HAVE ALSO HAD TO BUILD ARMIES ON A SOUND BASIS AND TO DEVELOP LEGISLATION TO THAT END. WE DO NOT CALL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT SUI GENERIS OF A MILITARY INSTITUTION FOR US. THE EXPERTS WHO HAVE HELPED FORM MY OPINION ON THE QUESTION HAVE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT THE MILITARY LAWS IN EFFECT IN MOST COUNTRIES, AND HAVE EXTRAPOLATED THE COMMON PRINCIPLES WHICH SURVIVED THE TEST OF EXPERIENCE, AND HAVE SOUGHT TO APPLY THEM HERE. THEY ARE THUS BASED ON VALID MILITARY SCIENTIFIC CRITERIA. (SALAAM HAS IN MIND AND IS ENDORSING THE NEW DRAFT ARMY LAW BEING PREPARED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY DEFENSE COMMITTEE UNDER THE LEADER-CONFIDENTIAL

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SHIP OF DEPUTY (AND FORMER COLONEL) FOUAD LAHOUD.
SEE REFTEL B).

11. IN ADDITION TO PUBLIC CRITICISMS, SEVERAL MOSLEMS
AND LEFTISTS HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR DISAFFECTION WITH
THE ARMY OF GENERAL VICTOR KHOURY DIRECTLY TO THIS
EMBASSY. BOTH WALID JUNBLATT AND NASSERIST LEADER KAMEL
SHATTILA WITHIN THE LAST WEEK HAVE RAISED THE ISSUE
WITH THE AMBASSADOR.

12 COMMENT: AS ISSUE OF WHO RUNS THE ARMY IS BEING
RAISED, DATT HAS EVIDENCE OF SYSTEMATIC PALESTINIAN EFFORT
TO REVIVE DISSIDENT MOSLEM-LEFTIST "LEBANESE ARAB ARMY"
AND A FIRST MAJOR SUCCESS OF THAT EFFORT AT NABATIYEH
(REFTEL A). WHETHER PALESTINIANS ARE STIMULATING
MOSLEM CRITICISM OF "MARONITE ARMY," OR TAKING ADVANTAGE
OF LEGITIMATE MOSLEM GRUMBLING, OR BOTH, IS UNCLEAR.
WHETHER JUSTIFIED OR NOT, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE QUESTION
OF MARONITE DOMINATION OF THE ARMY IS NOW A MAJOR
POLITICAL ISSUE. THE NEW MINISTER OF DEFENSE WILL HAVE
HIS WORK CUT OUT. GROUNDWORK FOR A SOLUTION IS BEING
PREPARED, OR AT LEAST THE PROBLEM IS BEING RECOGNIZED,
IN PARLIAMENTARY EFFORTS TO DRAFT A NEW ARMY LAW
(REFTEL B).
PARKER

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Message Attributes

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